



Give Stress a Rest

Stress is the body and mind's reaction to danger — real or imagined. It's an instinctive response that helps us protect ourselves by placing the body and mind on "alert." Causes of stress can be as simple as a loud noise or as complicated as family or work problems.

While stress can protect us, it can also damage our health if we experience it over a long period of time. This long-term or "chronic" stress has been linked to many health conditions including insomnia, high blood pressure, heart disease, weight problems and more. So to protect your health, it's important to learn to manage stress-causing situations effectively.

Following are some tips that may help you do this.

- Talk about what's bothering you. Develop a network of people you can depend on to listen. Let them help you when you need it most.
- Find activities that help you relax and make time for them. This could be taking a walk, working in your garden, reading a book or spending time with family.
- Take time to change "hats." We wear many hats each day — from caregiver to employee to personal shopper. If you change roles often, make sure you take time to prepare by setting aside time to change clothes, meditate or even take a quick nap for a needed boost of energy.
- Keep things in perspective. You're going to make mistakes. The line will sometimes be too long, and traffic during rush hour is a given. Just get through the situation and don't let it become more of a problem than it really is.
- Get organized. Clean out a closet. Make out a menu plan for a week of dinners. Get your financial records in order. A little order can go a long way in eliminating stressful situations.

Don't let stress rule you. If you feel that stress is affecting your well-being, take action to manage it. And if you think it's causing health problems, make sure you consult your doctor.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama cares about your health and wellness.

“For Your Health” is an informational series designed to provide you with specific ideas for ensuring you and your family enjoy a healthy and safe lifestyle. Sources are available upon request.

Visit our web site at www.bcbsal.com for more information.



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.